

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTES HONORING FORMER
CONGRESSMAN FALEOMAVAEGA
ENI FA'AUA'A HUNKIN, JR.

HON. AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend and former Member of Congress Faleomavaega Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin who served honorably as the representative for American Samoa for 26 years.

I want to thank everyone for being here and particularly want to acknowledge my friend Hinanui Hunkin, who came all the way from Utah with her children to be at this service. Because he spent over 30 years of his career in the nation's capital, it is only fitting to have a memorial service for Eni here. He would be gratified to see how he touched so many people who would come out to pay tribute to him.

Congressman Faleomavaega was a soldier and a statesman who dedicated his entire life to serving the United States and the people of American Samoa. Indeed, his entire career was devoted to public service and social justice. He was a champion of Native Americans, Native Hawaiians and the Melanesian natives of West Papua. His causes were many. He strenuously fought against nuclear weaponry, from confronting France in French Polynesia over nuclear testing to pressing for nuclear cleanup in Central Asia. He took up the cause of Korean comfort women, expressed concern about disputes in the South China Sea and even helped solve land disputes in Rapa Nui. Even as his health began to deteriorate, he refused to cut back his workload or give up any of his important causes.

Although we had our political differences, it never affected our personal friendship or devotion to the people of American Samoa. There was very little on which we disagreed when it came to the territory and, in fact, when I came into office, I picked up right where he left off in a lawsuit before the U.S. Supreme Court involving Samoan citizenship and voting rights. We both believed American Samoa's political should not be decided in a federal courtroom thousands of miles away; most importantly, it should be decided by our own people at a time of own choosing. Our approaches to issues were different and that often put us at odds with one another, but it was always with the utmost respect and grace, which allowed us to form the bond that we would come to share . . . One I am very thankful for, and will never forget. Ours was a true friendship that demonstrated that, despite our differences in political party, we can all come together for the good of those we serve. Partisan differences on national issues never interfered with our relationship because we were very much of one mind when it came to federal policy and funding for American Samoa.

As a veteran, whose long-term health suffered due to his service in Vietnam, Eni dedicated his life to improving the conditions for our veterans in American Samoa, and took great pride in securing funds to build the local VA Clinic, which has served our veterans well. Although I myself am not a veteran, I come from a family with a strong military tradition. My grandfather, father, several brothers and three nephews are, so I appreciate the needs of our veterans and am as devoted to them as Eni was.

As a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, I was in a position to offer legislation to name our local VA clinic in his honor. He was primarily responsible for the establishment of this clinic, so I could think of no more appropriate way to permanently honor his memory and legacy than by dedicating the clinic to him. Because of his long service in the House, he is remembered by many Members on both sides of the aisle who helped smooth the path for this tribute. As much as people complain about the slowness of the legislative process, my bill passed the House in less than a week, the Senate passed it a week later and in short order it was on the president's desk for signature.

After enactment of this legislation, I made arrangements for Members to speak of their colleague Eni on the floor of the House and am pleased to say that those tributes were delivered for the record, in addition to press statements made and remarks by several members on the Floor when we debated the VA clinic bill. In most of the stories written about Eni's passing, he was described as the longest serving Member of Congress in American Samoa's history. That is a title I expect will be his alone for many, many years to come, perhaps forever.

Goodbye My friend. Farewell and God-speed.

(The Samoan version is as follows):

E muamua ona ou Fa'atulou Le Pa'ia o le Maota Namu Asi, i le Paia O le lagi, ma le lagi, ma le lagi tulou, tulouna ia, tulouna lava. O Paia o le aufaigaluega tofofi a le Atua i ona Tafa'i Va'aia, ou to fa'atulou atu.

E le vaea fo'i le fala fofola loa o Samoa mai Saua e o'o atu i Salafai nu'unu'u atu fa'atini o tausala. O lo'o mamalu fo'i le aofia i le Afio Mai O Le Kovana Sili o le malo o Amerika Samoa, le tofa i le to'oto'o ia Lolo Moliga ma le Masiofo ia Cynthia, le afio i le Lutena Kovana ma le kapeneta, le paia o maota e lua i le afio o le Peresetene ma le senate, le Fofogafetai ma le Maota o Sui, o le mamalu lava lea o le afio o le fa'amasino sili ma le vaega o fa'amasinoga tulou, tulou lava.

E le fa'agaloina le tapuaiga i uso i sisifo i le afio i le ao o le malo tuto'atasi, le Palemia ma le Palemene o Samoa, ma le usoga ia Tumua ma Pule.

Ua tu mai nei Lagi le laga'ali a Tamafaiga, a ua tagita'amilo le Manual'i ina ua ta'ape papa, ae tafea le tau'ofe i le Afioga a Faleomavaega Eni Hunkin sa tu i le tofi o lo'o o'u tauaveina nei i Uosigitone.

O le lagi lava lea o le Tafatolu o lau faigamalo Amerika Samoa, tulou, tulou, tulou, tulouna lava.

Taluai o lea ua ou tula'i mai i le tofi Faipule i le Konekeresi i le Laumua i Uosigitone, o lea ou te fa'apea atu ai i le Faletua ia Hinanui ma le nofo a Alo loto fa'avauvau aemaise le tagi mai ala o le paia i Aiga ma Paolo ma Gafa sili i lagi tainane le Malo o Amerika Samoa ma le tapuaiga i le Malo Tuto'atasi i le Usoga Tumua ma Pule:

"Amuia e fa'anoanoa, aua e fa'amafanafanaina i latou."

CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

HON. COLLEEN HANABUSA

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Ms. HANABUSA. Mr. Speaker, I remember the first time I met Eni. It was in the Supreme Court of the State of Hawaii. As the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Chair for the Hawaii State Senate, I was speaking on behalf of a Circuit Court Judge, the first of American Samoan ancestry who was confirmed by the Senate and there to receive his oath of office. Eni was there, the Delegate to the Congress of the United States from American Samoa, to show his support for the Judge. Eni was so proud, as if he was being sworn in. I do know that American Samoans in Hawaii looked up to Eni as if he was their ultimate role model.

I was fortunate to serve four years in the House of Representatives with Eni. I learned from him how we each represent a constituency that deserves our advocacy, albeit that we may come from islands in the vast Pacific Ocean. I learned that our voices are equal to our colleagues and it is up to us to ensure that we are heard.

My favorite memory of Eni comes from 2012 when he performed the formal Samoan dance with his niece to honor the retirement of our much beloved and respected Senator Daniel K. Akaka. Eni told me Senator Akaka was his friend and his Senator. Eni proudly showed me his tattoos, made the traditional way. I was in awe of his strength and perseverance.

Most importantly, I will never forget the friendship of Eni and his wonderful smile and big bear hug I was so fortunate to receive whenever I saw him. Upon my return to Congress, my first questions were about Eni and if anyone had seen him.

I will miss you my friend.

My condolences to his wife, Hinanui Bambridge Cave, and their five children. Mahalo (Thank You) for sharing him with us for all these years.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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